



VA

Ralph H. Johnson
VA Health Care System



PGY1

Pharmacy Practice Residency Program

2024-2025

Program overview

The VA Charleston Health Care System is offering a 12-month ASHP-accredited PGY1 pharmacy practice residency. We are recruiting **4 residents** for academic year 2025-2026. The goal of the residency is to develop the resident's skills and competency in providing patient-centered care as part of multi-disciplinary primary care, specialty care, and inpatient teams. With nine core rotations and three electives, the resident is able to tailor the residency program to his/her interest area(s). We develop pharmacist clinicians for patient care positions, adjunct faculty or faculty positions, or PGY2 training.

[RHJ PGY1 Residency Homepage](#)

[VA Pharmacy Residencies Page](#)

Monthly topic discussions, PharmD student instruction, research, medication use evaluation, management

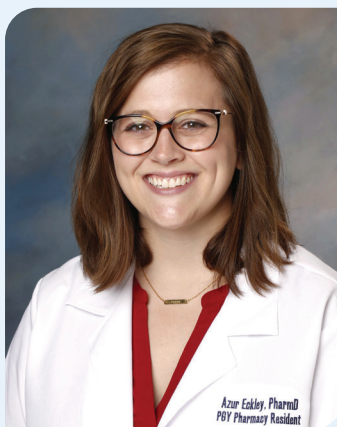
meetings, journal club, staffing (approximately 24 hours/month, paid) and continuing educational activities are included in the residency. The resident is matched with several mentors for the year for the clinical project, Academic Preparation Program(optional) and year-long mentor.

Residency Program Specifics

- Duration: 12 months
- Number of Positions: 4
- Application Deadline: January 2
- Estimated Starting Date: July 1 (varies slightly each year)
- Estimated Stipend: \$47,397 (varies each year slightly)



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We hope to meet you either in person or virtually through the below events:

2024 ASHP Residency Showcase:

December 10th booth number 5545 in the Tuesday 8 - 11am session.

Federal Pharmacy Virtual Recruitment Event:

Oct. 9 and Thursday, Oct. 10; please visit [VA Pharmacy Residency Program - Pharmacy Benefits Management Services](#) for additional information on programs participating in each date/time.



Core Experiences:

9 months – all PGY1 residents (monthlong rotations)

- Orientation
- Primary Care- PACT Clinic (6-week rotation)
- Primary Care 2 – additional PACT or Home-Based Primary Care
- Anticoagulation
- Inpatient Acute Care Adult Medicine (6 week Rotation)
- Critical Care
- Management & Administration
- December: Project month

Longitudinal Experiences:

(throughout entire year)

- Staffing (inpatient, outpatient on rotating basis – nights, weekends & holidays)
- Non-formulary Request Evaluation and Drug Information
- Adverse Drug Event Reporting
- Presentations: Journal Club, Topic Discussion/Complex Case Presentation, Continuing Education, Nonformulary Drug Review
- Optional: Teaching Certificate Program

Elective experiences:

3 months (typically month-long)

Inpatient-based electives:

- Inpatient Acute Care Adult Medicine II
- Critical Care II
- Inpatient Staffing
- Emergency Department
- Mental Health

Ambulatory Care-based electives:

- Primary Care Clinics
- Specialty Clinics*

Anemia Clinic, Geriatrics, Infectious Diseases/HIV Clinic, Endocrinology Clinic, Pain Clinic, Rheumatology Clinic, Neurology Clinic, Mental Health, Hematology/Oncology, Cardiology, Pulmonary, Gastroenterology, Transplant Clinic

* Specialty clinics generally meet on certain days of the week, therefore, 2-3 specialty clinics are often combined into a month-long rotation.

Additional information: Ralph H. Johnson VAMC offers PGY2 programs in Ambulatory Care and Psychiatry (2 each)

Brief rotation descriptions for Elective Experiences

Primary Care

Preceptor: Thomas J. Worrall, BS. Pharm., Pharm.D., BCACP, FAPhA (several additional PACT Pharmacist Preceptors)

Preceptor Contact: Thomas.Worrall@va.gov

Medication Management Clinics including but not limited to HTN, DM, lipids, heart failure, gout, smoking cessation and COPD are pharmacist-run primary care clinics. Pharmacy residents work alongside seasoned pharmacy practitioners in the direct care of veterans. Residents also gain experience in precepting students, reviewing non-formulary drug requests, answering drug information questions, taking care of patient inquiries over the phone or by secure messaging, counseling patients on new

and existing medications, and processing electronic medication orders.

Locations:

- Charleston area: North Charleston Clinic, Goose Creek Naval Weapons Station
- Myrtle Beach
- Beaufort
- Hinesville, GA
- Savannah, GA

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)

Preceptor: Michael Behrens, BCPS, BCGP

Preceptor Contact: Michael.Behrens2@va.gov

The HBPC is a multidisciplinary primary care team designed to provide care to homebound patients in their homes by maximizing function, minimizing hospitalizations, and maintaining quality of life. The resident works with the interdisciplinary team to facilitate patient care through completion of home visits (as able), Medication Management

Clinic telephone appointments, HBPC Pharmacy Quarterly Review notes, non-formulary requests, polypharmacy/geriatric e-consults and drug information questions. Attendance to HBPC home visits to assist nursing or providers with medication reconciliation and/or patient and caregiver education may be requested, as available.

Anticoagulation Clinic

Preceptor: Cailin Lutz, PharmD

Preceptor Contact: Cailin.Lutz@va.gov

Anticoagulation clinics are pharmacist-run clinics focusing on warfarin monitoring, management of LMWH bridging therapy and direct oral anticoagulation (DOAC) monitoring. Residents are directly involved with

new anticoagulation consults, patient assessment and education, monitoring labs, and adjusting medication dosages.

Anemia Clinic

Preceptor: Ashley Donato, PharmD

Preceptor Contact: Ashley.Donato@va.gov

The Anemia Clinic is an outpatient, pharmacist-run medication monitoring service for management of iron (oral/IV) and erythropoiesis stimulating agents (ESAs - epoetin or darbepoetin). Patients require frequent laboratory monitoring to ensure medication therapy is safe and effective.

Residents are directly involved with adjustments to medication regimen and conducting patient telephone visits.

Inpatient Mental Health

Preceptor: Kelly Krieger, PharmD, BCPS, BCPP

Preceptor Contact: Kelly.Krieger2@va.gov

The resident will have the opportunity to round with the mental health inpatient team, provide admission and discharge medication reconciliation, order/verify medications, serve as a drug information resource, complete non-formulary medication and mental health

e-consult requests, facilitate medication group, and mentor/educate residents, students, and coworkers as applicable.

Inpatient Acute Care Adult Medicine

Preceptor: Sara Lucas, PharmD, BCPS (3 additional internal medicine pharmacist preceptors in rotation)

Preceptor Contact: Sara.Lucas@va.gov

There are 50 medicine beds followed by 4 internal medicine teams which each include an attending physician, 1 (PGY 2 or PGY 3) medical resident, 2 PGY1 interns, and medical students. Other disciplines that may be involved in the multi-disciplinary team include:

- Pharmacy residents
- Pharmacy students
- Social worker
- Dietitian
- Case manager
- Respiratory therapist
- Diabetic educator

The resident will be responsible for rounding with one internal medicine team daily, following all patients on that team, and serve as a drug information resource for the team, perform admission and discharge medication reconciliation and counseling, and provide targeted monitoring of high-risk inpatient medicine populations (patients receiving warfarin, aminoglycosides, vancomycin, and screening for patients with impaired renal function).

The resident will also participate in patient discussions and topic discussions, give in-service presentations, and review and complete medication orders following provider order entry.

Critical Care

Preceptor: David Deen, PharmD

Preceptor Contact: David.Deen@va.gov

The resident will have the opportunity to experience specialized aspects of the medical and surgical ICU. This rotation will provide residents with the opportunity to round with the medical ICU team, assess, analyze, recommend, monitor, and modify drug therapy regimens, participate in rapid responses and codes, participate in

weekly topic discussions and in-service presentations, review and manage all patients on TPN, and participate with the stroke team. 21 bed service.

Non-formularies and Drug Information (longitudinal)

Preceptor: Marisa Strychalski, PharmD, BCPS, BCACP

Preceptor Contact: Marisa.Strychalski@va.gov

Nonformulary drug requests are entered by providers in the facility that wish to use a nonformulary medication for a particular patient.

These requests are reviewed by clinical pharmacists in their respective areas for appropriateness and safety according to local and national criteria for use. Residents work with three specialty clinic pharmacists to complete these nonformulary consults entered by various clinics, including eye/ENT, endocrinology, neurology,

dermatology and gastroenterology clinics. Residents also serve as a drug information resource for the entire hospital during their assigned block.

This rotation allows residents to improve their knowledge and skills regarding literature searches and medical writing, as well as communication with various providers and pharmacoeconomic analyses.

Pain Management Clinic

Preceptor: Caylee Sams, PharmD

Preceptor Contact: Caylee.Sams@va.gov

Two clinical pharmacists offer advanced level clinical services for patients enrolled in an interdisciplinary chronic pain management team clinic and as part of an agreement with Primary Care.

Opioid and non-opioid medication management, non-pharmacologic pain management, and pain consult management are the main everyday responsibilities of the clinical pharmacists.

The resident is available in clinic to assist with pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic pain management; pain consult management; prior authorization drug requests; and counsel patients on pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic pain treatments.

Neurology

Preceptor: Alison Martin, PharmD, BCPS, BCACP

Preceptor Contact: Alison.Martin@va.gov

The resident will work as a member of the neurology team including attending physicians, medical fellows and residents, nursing staff, as well as other pharmacy staff.

The resident will be responsible for following all consulted patients as assigned by the preceptor, serving as a drug information resource for the neurology clinic, and participating in daily patient discussions and topic discussions as they occur.

This rotation allows for documentation of interventions, medications errors, and adverse drug reactions and involves disease states such as headache disorders, movement disorders, seizures, neuropathy and many more.

Management and Administration / P&T Committee

Preceptors: Tina Plemmons, PharmD, BCPS and Dorothy Jenrette, PharmD

Preceptor Contacts: Cristina.Plemmons@va.gov and Dorothy.Jenrette@va.gov

The resident will be responsible for working alongside pharmacy supervisors in the management of pharmacy functions including operations and ambulatory care.

The resident will gain insight into duties of supervisory pharmacists including gathering and analyzing report data, attending departmental meetings, managing and prioritizing workload and evaluating efficiency of current pharmacist run clinics.

The resident will be involved in projects that may include policy and procedure development, financial

management, regulatory activities, and identifying opportunities for improvement of the organizations medication use system.

The residents will also attend P&T Committee, Medication Cost Avoidance Task Force, and Medication Error Aggregate Review team meetings that may involve multiple projects and reports including clinical newsletters, medication use evaluations, drug monographs or class reviews, and analysis of high alert medication errors.

Infectious Diseases

Preceptor: Caroline Powers, PharmD, BCIDP

Preceptor Contact: Caroline.Powers@va.gov

The resident will be responsible for optimizing antimicrobial and antiretroviral therapy in both the inpatient and outpatient setting through individual patient intervention, as well as development and implementation of pertinent policies and procedures. The resident will identify and implement all Antimicrobial Stewardship interventions in the inpatient setting. In the outpatient setting, the resident will have the opportunity

to participate in Infectious Disease Specialty Clinic every Wednesday morning, with a focus on the management of HIV patients.

Other opportunities include managing patients receiving Outpatient Parenteral Antimicrobial Therapy (OPAT), Hepatitis C pharmacotherapy, and Antimicrobial Stewardship metrics and outcomes.

Endocrinology Clinic

Preceptor: Jessica (Quinn) Swiderek, PharmD, BCACP

Preceptor Contact: Jessica.Swiderek@va.gov

Endocrine clinic is a pharmacist-run clinic conducted at the same time as the physician-run endocrine clinic. It is designed to give the resident exposure to more intensive diabetes management as well as a brief introduction into other endocrine related issues.

Care may include: type 1 and type 2 diabetes management, post-transplant diabetes management, U-500 and insulin resistance, carbohydrate counting for prandial insulin dosing, and insulin pumps.

Rheumatology Clinic (Tuesdays on site, other days virtual, no clinic day Fridays)

Preceptor: Lori Bennett, PharmD, BCPS

Preceptor Contact: Lori.Bennett2@va.gov

A clinical pharmacist offers collaborative clinical services for patients enrolled in Rheumatology clinic.

Medication monitoring and laboratory follow-up of dose titrations or toxicities is the focus of the clinical pharmacist's duties. Rheumatology patients on high-risk medications, primarily methotrexate and leflunomide, are regularly monitored according to American College of

Rheumatology guidelines, for dose titrations, or follow-up of toxicities. Patients are scheduled following provider referral.

The resident also participates in topic discussions and reviews and processes medication orders from rheumatology clinic.

Specialty Clinic (Cardiology/pulmonary/gastroenterology/dermatology)

Preceptor: Azur Eckley, PharmD, BCPS

Preceptor Contact: Azur.Eckley@va.gov

This rotation is designed to expose residents to specialty care disease states and formulary management.

The resident will have the opportunity to provide patient care via telehealth for cardiology patients and for pulmonary/gastroenterology medication monitoring, as well as work as a member of the inter-disciplinary team for both cardiology and gastroenterology live clinics that include physicians, medical fellows and residents, and nursing staff.

Residents are directly involved with adjustments to medication regimens post-hospital discharge as well as assisting in patients transition and coordination of care surrounding acute heart failure exacerbations.

Hematology/Oncology

Preceptor: Bailey Crandall, PharmD, BCPS, BCOP

Preceptor Contact: Bailey.Crandall@va.gov

This rotation will be focused on the care of patients with hematologic and solid tumor malignancies in both the inpatient and outpatient settings.

The hematology/oncology team includes two full-time VA focused attendings, one VA/MUSC attendings, and eight MUSC hematology/oncology fellows (both 3rd and 2nd year fellows), and one nurse practitioner.

Other disciplines that may be involved in the multi-disciplinary team include: pharmacists that cover the IV rooms, infusion clinic, inpatient services, infusion clinic nurses, and nurse navigators.

The resident will be responsible for Wednesday and Thursday Fellow's Clinics, following all patients for one fellow at the preceptor's discretion, serving as a drug information resource for the team, and providing targeted

monitoring of antineoplastic chemotherapy (both oral and IV) and immunotherapy. The resident will be responsible for requesting additions to the drug file (as applicable), completing hem/onc non-formulary requests, and chemotherapy order verification (with the infusion pharmacist).

The resident will also assist with the oral chemotherapy clinic by counseling patients on oral chemotherapy and supportive care (either in person or via telephone), lab monitoring and toxicity assessment phone calls at the initiation of therapy and periodically thereafter.

The resident will also participate in patient discussions and topic discussions, and assist with quality assurance projects (if applicable).

Transplant Clinic

Preceptor: Miranda Kopfman, PharmD

Preceptor Contact: Miranda.Kopfman@va.gov

The transplant clinical pharmacy specialist provides collaborative direct care for patients that received a solid organ transplant and obtains immunosuppressive medications through the Ralph H. Johnson VAMC.

The primary goal of the transplant pharmacist is to assure that optimal immunosuppression therapeutic drug monitoring is occurring for these patients; this includes

monitoring and adjusting immunosuppression regimens based on drug trough concentrations, goals of net levels of immunosuppression, drug toxicities, tolerability, comorbidities, organ transplant type, transplant vintage and other patient-specific factors.

Post Discharge Clinic

Preceptor: Hanie Barakat, PharmD, BCPS

Preceptor Contact: Hanie.Barakat@va.gov

The Post-Discharge Clinical Pharmacy Practitioner (CPP) is responsible for following up with patients in the acute setting after a hospital discharge. The CPP will follow up with the patient ~7 days after discharge to review any pertinent medication changes and assess for compliance, tolerability, and medication monitoring, when necessary. Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions are reviewed and managed acutely if deemed necessary by the provider.

Upon discharge from the pharmacy post-discharge clinic, care coordination is implemented to ensure that the patient's disposition for chronic disease state management is appropriate. Disease states managed in the post-discharge clinic include, but are not limited to congestive heart failure, diabetes, hypertension, lipid management/CAD management, COPD.

Resident Biographies 2024-2025

PGY1 Residency Program



Alexandra (Alehx) Carlson

Alexandra is a Navy Veteran who is originally from Ocala, Florida. She moved to Charleston, SC in 2017 to work at the Naval Health Clinic Charleston Pharmacy. She earned an Associate's of Science degree from Trident Technical College before leaving active duty to pursue and complete her Doctor of Pharmacy at the Medical University of South Carolina. During pharmacy school she was involved in the Student Government Association and ASHP.

In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her boyfriend and pets, reading and traveling.

Her clinical interests are ambulatory care, transplant, and pain/palliative care. Upon completing PGY1 residency, she hopes to either complete a PGY2 residency or practice at the VA as a clinical pharmacy specialist.



Brooke Jordan-Brown

Brooke is a South Carolina native and grew up in Greenville. She played basketball at UNC Asheville where she received a bachelor's degree in Biology in 2020 and she recently graduated from the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy in 2024.

Her current interests in pharmacy include ambulatory care, cardiology, and rheumatology.

In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her Schnauzers Ziggy and Boo and spending the day at the beach. She is excited to be back in her home state and is looking forward to exploring the city of Charleston.



Kristin Allen

Kristin is originally from Destin, Florida. She moved to Charleston from Birmingham, Alabama where she completed her fourth year APPE pharmacy school rotations.

She received her bachelor's degree in biomedical sciences from Auburn University in 2021 and completed her Doctor of Pharmacy degree at Auburn University Harrison College of Pharmacy in 2024. During pharmacy school, Kristin was involved in ASHP, ACCP, the Rho Chi Society and worked as a pharmacy intern at Publix Pharmacy for 2 years.

In her free time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading, traveling, and trying new restaurants.

Her clinical interests are ambulatory care and geriatrics. Upon completing PGY1 residency, she plans to practice as a clinical pharmacy specialist.



Allison Eppenauer

Allison (or Ali) is originally from the small town of Sedalia, Missouri (Home of the Missouri State Fair!) She received her associate's degree in Pre-Pharmacy from State Fair Community College in Sedalia in 2020 and completed her Doctor of Pharmacy from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 2024. During pharmacy school she was involved in APhA, ASHP, Phi Lambda Sigma, the Rho Chi Society, and Kappa Psi. Her clinical interests are ambulatory care, rural health, and endocrinology. Upon completing PGY1 residency, she plans to complete a PGY2 ambulatory care program and later practice as a clinical pharmacy specialist. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her orange cat (Muffin), watching the Chiefs win, and trying out new Mexican restaurants with friends! She is very excited to experience this opportunity in the beautiful city of Charleston!

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS THE STAFFING MODEL LIKE AT VA CHARLESTON HEALTH CARE?

The staffing model for VA Charleston HCS Pharmacy Residency is subject to change slightly each year based on the needs of our department both inpatient and outpatient. On average pharmacy residents will staff between 22-30 hours per month between inpatient and outpatient pharmacy practice. Each staffing shift is a paid staffing shift under dual-appointment, allowing residents to receive a secondary staffing pharmacist salary for these hours.

HOW ARE ELECTIVE ROTATIONS SELECTED?

Each resident will meet with the RPD within the 5-week orientation period to discuss individual preference for their elective rotations. A rotation schedule will be drawn out for the year but will be reviewed each quarter at the Quarterly Development Planning (QDP) meetings between the RPD and resident. As the year progresses, our program takes pride in the ability to be flexible, when possible, and change elective rotations based on the needs and interests of each resident and availability of clinical preceptors. In short, we do everything in our power to make sure you get the experiences you want within the time allotted.

WHAT TYPE OF RESEARCH MODEL IS UTILIZED (i.e. inverted vs traditional?)

Our program utilizes a traditional research model that allows the resident the opportunity to see a research project from start to finish. Most projects are typically Quality Improvement or Quality Assurance focused subject matter as prospective research that requires IRB approval can often be challenging to complete within the residency academic timeline. VA Charleston is grateful to employ a team of Clinical Pharmacy Specialists in Informatics that serve as key members of the Research Advisory Committee to ensure each project has robust and complete data, structure and outcomes.

IS CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE SUPPORTED?

Budgets can change quickly within the VA system; however, each year we review our ability to support resident attendance to national conference with support from our program. PGY1 residents are required to attend the Southeastern Residency Conference (SERC) each Spring to present completed resident research projects. If possible, we intend to support PGY1 resident attendance to ASHP Midyear and Clinical Meeting for purposes of residency program recruitment and PGY2 Residency application.

DO THE PGY2 PROGRAMS EARLY COMMIT?

We have two PGY2 Pharmacy Residency Program currently with 2 positions each (2 PGY2 Ambulatory Care Pharmacy and 2 PGY2 Psychiatry Pharmacy). Early commitment is something our program encourages and looks forward to each year. As of 2023-2024, our programs also began participating in the National VA Pharmacy Residency Early Commit Process.

WHAT TEACHING CERTIFICATE OPTIONS, IF ANY ARE AVAILABLE?

Our program offers two options for completion of a teaching certificate. One option is conducted through the Medical University of South Carolina (more traditional teaching certificate option; focus on academic and didactic teaching methods) or the second option which is the VA Residency Certificate (focus on teaching as a clinician, more commonly in a precepting role rather than in a classroom setting).



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**Thank you for visiting Ralph H. Johnson VA Health Care System
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More Questions?

Contact Azur Eckley, PharmD, BCPS
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